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RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WILLITON.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1956.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

C.F.R.KILLICK.,M.B.,Ch.B.,MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
R.B.PERRETT.,M.P.H.I.A.,CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR
A.P.L.WALLIS.,M.P.H.I.A.,ADDITIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR
R.J.ASHMAN.,CLERK TO THE DEPARTMENT.

G.H.PEARCE.,RODENT OPERATIVE

BURNELL'S GARAGE,WOOTTON COURTNEY - REFUSE COLLECTION (By Contract).

WILLITON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1956.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

Mr.Chairman,Ladies & Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my annual report on the health and sanitary circumstances of the district for the year 1956.

The general health of the district has been satisfactory,there being no epidemic disease of any consequence.

In the following sections I detail the work of the department during the year,together with vital statistics and the general public health services.

Section A. Vital Statistics and Social Conditions.
Section B. Water Supplies,Sewage and Refuse Disposal.
Section C. Housing.
Section D. Food Inspection and Supplies.
Section E. Public Health Nuisances,Complaints,Etc.
Section F. Camping.
Section G. Other Acts administered by the Department.
Section H. Summary of Inspections and Visits made by the Department's Officers.

Section A.
Vital Statistics & Social Conditions.

There is little truly slum property in the district,housing conditons being reasonably good;lack of air-space seldom enters the picture and any lack of ventilation that may be met with is mostly due to low ceilings and badly placed windows.

The standard of repair is reasonably good,one of the most prevalent defects met with being worn and defective thatch in properties so roofed. Dampness in most properties is slight although in 75-80% of cases there is no damp-proof course.

Water supplies have,on the whole,proved adequate in quantity to serve the present population and the seasonal influx of holiday-makers. Chemical quality of these supplies has proved entirely satisfactory but some improvement could be made towards the bacteriological quality of unchlorinated supplies. Future schemes,including the Clatworthy and Western Parishes schemes will do much towards this end.

The death rate for the area compares favourably with that for the country as a whole in spite of this being an area much favoured by people of retiring age.

Area	97,364
Population (Estimated mid-year home population)	13,190
Number of Dwelling Houses	4,362
Rateable Value	£126,231
Product of a Penny Rate	£495

Live Births.	M.	F.	Total.
Legitimate	76	79	155
Illegitimate	5	4	9
Total -	81	83	164

Birth Rate per 1000 population (live births)	24·8
National Rate per 1000	15.7

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Still Births.	M.	F.	Total.
Legitimate	1	3	4
Illegitimate	-	1	1
	1	4	5

Deaths.

From all causes	106	102	208

Death Rate per 1000 population 15.7
National " " " " " 11.7

Health Services.
The District is served by Hospitals at Minehead and Musgrove Park, Taunton, and Hospitals for the Aged Sick at Williton, Bridgwater and Taunton.
Ambulance services, voluntarily run, are available from Watchet and Minehead, also from Musgrove Park.
Steam disinfection facilities continue to be available at the Williton and District Hospital.

Notifiable Diseases.	Cases Notified.
Smallpox	Nil
Scarlet Fever	3
Diphtheria	Nil
Enteric Fever	"
Measles	29
Whooping Cough	23
Puerperal Pyrexia	2
Opthalmia Neonatorum	Nil
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	"
Dysentery	"
Malaria	"
Pneumonia	4
Acute Poliomyelitis	Nil
Encephalitis Lethargica	"
Erysipelas	2
Tuberculosis (Respiratory)	5
" (Non-respiratory)	Nil
Food Poisoning	"

One case of Infantile Paralysis was notified to the department from a Midland town as occurring in that district following the patient's holidaying in this district. All necessary precautionary measures were taken.

Section B.
Water Supplies, Sewage & Refuse Disposal.
Water shortages occurred during the year at West Hawkwell, Porlock, Williton and Timberscombe. This followed a period of only slight rainfall. Notices of shortage were posted in these Parishes, and the public response to requests for restraint in the use of water was all that could be desired. The West Hawkwell supply was maintained by carrying water from Allerford and Timberscombe until the new extension from Blagdon Cross made this unnecessary.
Bacteriological sampling of all main supplies, both publicly and privately owned, has continued.
Results are much the same as for the previous year but it must be said that the supplies which gave cause for most concern have been improved. The chlorinated supplies gave no trouble.
The Public Analyst has examined twenty samples of water for chemical content and found all to be satisfactory. Most of the supplies are moderately soft in character and carry little organic impurity.
No plumbo-solvent action has been noted.

The Engineer and Surveyor's department has made steady progress with the Clatworthy main scheme, designed to supply all the central area Parishes from the Taunton Corporation's proposed reservoir at Clatworthy.
A scheme to provide one combined supply to the Western Parishes has been formulated and the views of the Ministry, and County and other local bodies are being sought.
Bacteriological samples taken from main supplies totalled 275, of which 37 proved unsatisfactory.
Private well, spring and other supplies, or proposed supplies have received attention, 41 samples having been taken for bacteriological analysis, 10 proving unsatisfactory. Two well supplies have been closed, public main supplies having been substituted.
Public supply improvements and extensions carried out during the year include -

1. Extension from Blagdon Cross to West Hawkwell
2. Williton and Sampford Brett public supply to Woolston Moor cottages
3. Chlorination plant and reservoir at Holford
4. Extension at Kilve.

Sewage Disposal.
Seven of the thirty Parishes within the district have main drainage. Future proposals in the priority group include Crowcombe Scheme for which trail pits are being dug, and the Blue Anchor and Washford and Roadwater schemes.
Many complaints, both written and verbal were received by the department, showing concern regarding the crude sewage washing up on the beach at Blue Anchor.
Some septic tanks in the heavier soils of the area have given either occasional or continuous trouble. One notice was served requiring the re-draining of an effluent flowing into a highway surface water gulley, and the matter was attended to promptly.
There are still many sink and bath wastes discharging into roadside ditches creating nuisances in dry weather.
Refuse Disposal.
Refuse was collected by contract as in previous years. Four tips are still in regular use and the one at Stringston is being extended to complete the filling of a quarry land-scar. Three of the tips in use are in disused quarries, the other being on the foreshore of Porlock Bay. There has been no serious nuisance of any kind.
The dumping of household and trade refuse, especially ashes, under hedges, beside roadways and in water courses continues, an everpresent reminder of the inadequacy of the present collection service.
Litter.
An additional three dozen litter baskets have been set out in the district to augment the four dozen already in use. Many of the public I feel have become more litter concious, the baskets having been made good use of and when full, other litter has been stacked beneath them. At the height of the holiday season it became difficult to keep baskets cleared at the busiest points, and cases have occurred when a 36" basket has been filled within three hours. However, the Council's staff, including the Rodent Operative on his rounds, and the Contractor's staff, have kept the baskets cleared and quite often have also cleared much litter which has been indiscriminately strewn around.
Section C.
Housing.
The total number of houses in the district is 4,326 and of these 659 are owned by the Local Authority.
Some progress has been made with the Slum Clearance proposals, six Demolition Orders having been made and thirteen Closing Orders No action has been taken under Section 9 of the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954, but 19 notices have been served under Public Health Act nuisance clauses in respect of house defects. Of these, 16 have been complied with.

33 houses have been made totally fit with the aid of grants under the Housing Acts; 45 applications or enquiries for grants were received in respect of 60 properties. 23 schemes, 9 being from owner/occupiers, were approved for the modernising of 30 properties. Applications in respect of 7 properties were rejected.
The average cost per dwelling modernised was £567 and grants varied from 33⅓% to 50% of the total cost of improvements, a total of £6297 being paid out by the Local Authority. Eight of the dwellings modernised this year would have been the subject of Demolition or Closing Orders had a grant not been taken up. The agricultural community has taken much interest in the grant scheme, 35 worker's dwellings having been modernised since 1954. In the majority of these instances the cottages are isolated and their replacement by Council-built houses would have been unlikely.
No Certificates of Disrepair have been applied for. There are no Common Lodging Houses or Houses let in Lodgings within the district.

Section D.
Food Inspection & Supplies.
Slaughtering & Meat Inspection. Of the seven private slaughter houses in the district, three only continue to operate regularly.
There are no bacon factories. No horses have been slaughtered for human consumption.
The slaughter houses are, in the main, structurally sound and drainage is satisfactory. There was a decrease in the number of animals slaughtered during the year, particularly cows. Beef has been of prime quality and the incidence of Tuberculosis is very low. The high percentage of cattle and cows affected with disease other than Tuberculosis is attributable to Cirrhotic and Fluke-infested livers. In the case of calves and sheep condemnations were due to severe bruising, taint, or oedema in casualty animals.
Overtime duties were again carried out by both the Inspectors, due more to the slaughtering and delivery times rather than the amount of killing. This involved, together with meat inspection carried out during normal working hours, some 3000 miles of travelling.
Condemned meat and offal is disposed of to local Hunt kennels, an arrangement that works quite well.

Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part.

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep & Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed	537	20	83	2400	339	nil
Number inspected	535	20	83	2308	334	-
All diseases except T.B and Cysticerci. Whole carcases condemned	nil	nil	1	8	1	-
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned.	119	5	nil	13	5	-
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than T.B. and Cysticerci.	22.24%	25%	1.20%	0.91%	1.8%	-

Condemnations-cont'd.	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep & Lambs	Pigs	Horses
T.B.only.						
Whole carcases condemned	1	nil	nil	nil	1	nil
Part or organ condemned	9	nil	nil	nil	9	nil
Percentage of the number inspected affected with T.B.	1.68%	nil	nil	nil	3%	nil
Cysticercosis.						
Carcases affected	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Weight of Meat Condemned (Lbs)-						
(a)Tuberculosis	301	nil	nil	nil	91	nil
(b)Cysticercosis	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
(c)Other	812	56	28	524	135	nil
Total -	1113	56	28	524	226	nil

Other Foodstuffs Condemned.

Tins of Meat & Fish 19
" " Fruit & Vegetables 38
" " Condensed or Evaporated Milk 2

Food Premises & Food Hygiene.

The Food Hygiene Regulations,1955,which came into force on the 1st January entailed the inspection of most food premises within the district to ensure compliance with the requirements. The Regulations insist that,unless subject to a certificate of exemption,all food premises shall have a constant supply of both hot and cold water, that wash-basins be provided and other items,including first aid kit accommodation for clothing,etc.

Food premises visited are detailed below,also the number of notices served requiring compliance with the Regulations.

	Inspected.	Notices Served.	Notices complied with.
Butchers Shops	9	4	4
Bakehouses	5	3	2
Guest Houses & Hotels	15	nil	nil
Cafes & Restaurants	16	6	5
Grocery & Provision Stores	20	7	7
Public Houses	25	8	nil

The majority of notices have been requests for the provision of constant supplies of hot water,and in almost every case this has been provided in the form of an electric sink heater unit.

There were no dirty or structurally dilapidated premises. No certificates of exemption have been applied for.

Notices outstanding against Public Houses are somewhat in abeyance pending liaison with the Licencing Justices.

Section E.
Public Health Nuisances, Complaints, Etc.
There were fewer complaints regarding litter than in the previous year, nevertheless, litter is still a problem and most complaints concerning it came from areas where receptacles were insufficient to deal with it at Bank Holidays and similar times.
During dry weather many roadside ditches taking discharges from sink, etc, gave rise to smell nuisances.
Several premises were disinfected following the removal of cases of infectious disease.
The department has disinfested six premises where cockroaches were a nuisance, and here, as with fly infestations in roofspaces "Gammexane" has proved very effective.
There have been no smoke nuisances.
Rodent Control.
The Council's operative has been fully employed throughout the year, treatments and inspections carried out are as follows :-

Property.	Inspected.	Treated.
Domestic	596	404
Agricultural	76	19
Business	43	31
Totals-	715	454

Sewer treatments have been carried out in accordance with Ministry requirements and 'block control' schemes operated where necessary.
Several letters of appreciation have been received by the department complimenting the operative on his efficient work.

Section F.
Camping.
There was less camping in the area than in the preceding exceptional seasons.
There are 16 licenced sites and 20 licences in force for individual moveable dwellings. From a resident population of approximately 20 campers all the year round, the number increased to somwhere in the region of 3000 per day at the height of the season.

Section G.
Factories Act, 1937.
The number of factories in the district decreased from 56 to 51 in all. A complaint was received from H.M. Inspector of Factories regarding the condition of certain premises and the necessary action was taken. Inspections have been made from time to time and the department is about to commence a survey of all Factories requiring Certificates as to Means of Escape in Case of Fire.
There are 12 outworkers residing within the district.
Pet Animals Act.
Rag Flock Act.
There are no pet shops within the district or premises dealing in rag flock.
Prevention of Damage by Pests Act.
Details of action taken are dealt with under Section E.

Section H.
Summary of Visits & Inspections.

Housing Acts, 1936-1954.

Housing Inspections	769
Statutory Notices Served	30
Informal Notices Served	14

Public Health Acts.

Inspections of Drainage & Sewerage	106
" " Water Supplies	52
" " Refuse Disposal	118
" " Camping Sites	41
" " Filthy or Verminous Premises	29
" " Sanitary Fittings	6
" " Nuisances	50
" " Public Conveniences	8
Statutory Notices Served	9

Food & Drugs Acts.

(See also under Sec:D.Food Premises & Food Hygiene)

Inspections of Slaughterhouses	34
" " Knackers Yards	7

Factories Act.

Inspections	18
Total Complaints Received	117
" " Investigated	117

This year has seen the redesignation of the Sanitary Inspectors to the title of Public Health Inspectors, more in keeping with and descriptive of, their duties. No doubt much correspondence will continue to be addressed to The "Sanitary Inspector", as even today some letters arrive addressed to "Inspector of Nuisances", a title relinquished in 1875!

In conclusion I would like to thank the staff of the Public Health Department for their continued good work.

I am, Mr. Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

C.M. Williams M.B., Ch.B.

Medical Officer of Health.